



# **‘Employment towards Empowerment for Persons with Mental Health Issues. Challenges and Prospects’**

Ratnaboli Ray  
Founder Anjali  
Co-Founder NAAJMI  
Ashoka Fellow



# Psychological Experience and Productivity

**Employment provides psychological experience that promotes well-being** —

- Time Structure – Helps foster a sense of time, space and being
- Social Contact – Helps foster a sense of belonging, learning and re-learning appropriate social customs
- Collective Effort and Purpose – Employment offers a social context outside the family
- Social Identity - Employment is an important element in defining oneself. It brings in a sense of productivity to the individual while simultaneously adding to their self-worth and stand in society ;
- Regular Activity – It helps in organizing one's daily life around a routine.

# The Person and The Gaps



- Jobs for workers with mental health problems always a challenge; more so in periods of high unemployment
- 1995 Harvard Report on World Mental Health states that mental health in low-income countries has remained stagnant or decreased
- Current system concentrates on medication which does not help reduce negative symptoms in users
- Grooming of users important before re-entering the work market: Self care, Continued care-taking, Intensive training in area of work when working in an enterprise set-up, Working on elevating negative symptoms through counseling and therapy, Helping to re-establish connect with the world outside the hospital walls

# The “Users” and Change

- Globalization, Privatization, Downsizing NOT valid excuses – Right to access to equal opportunities
- Private-Public, Organizations-Retail Outlet Partnerships :
  - The importance of sourcing out prospective partners by linking the products made and the set-up of these partners,
  - Setting up a contract,
  - Allowing space for flexibility and adjustment, Working on a joint marketing strategy by utilizing the partner’s existing resources and providing inputs of our own

# The Anjali Way: Behind the Scenes

## 2 Hospitals in Kolkata, 1 in Bahrampur Vocational Therapeutic Training :

- Music and Singing
- Dance Movement Therapy
- Art and Crafts – Products like greeting cards, wrappers, envelopes, paper bags, lampshades
- Gardening- Decorative plants in bamboos
- Doll Making- Funky stuffed toys as ‘characters’
- Stitching / Sewing- Using recycled cloth to make spreads, runners, light covers, yardage
- Block Printing- Only on paper used in all our stationery products
- Weaving- Mats, Towels





# The Anjali Way: Outside Picture

- Promote good mental health practices in the workplace by employers;
  - how to handle an employee who becomes ill with a mental health problem
  - vocational rehabilitation models/programmes for persons with long-term mental health problems
  - how to work with encouraging employee with negative symptoms, a mental health problem and when suffering from a general listlessness
- Quality Check
  - Same finishing and value for each product,
  - Comparison to previous products and improvisation on designs, shortcoming and over-all output
  - Utilization of good-quality raw materials, and regular training for users to help maintain consistency in products
- Salary details recorded diligently; part of the payment given to the participants, rest kept for their use when re-settling outside the hospital. We are in dialogue with our participants at all times in this regard.

# Our Partners



- **Sasha** - Paper bags (Brown and Textured Paper), Wrapping papers, Textured Handmade papers, Cards, Envelopes, Note books, Recycled note books
- **Byloom** - Wrapping papers, Textured Handmade papers, Cards, Note books
- **LabelEtoffef Geneva**-Wrapping papers, Textured Handmade papers, Paper bags (Brown and Rice Paper)
- **Mustard Seeds**- Paper bags (Brown and Textured Paper), Wrapping papers, Textured Handmade papers, Cards, Envelopes, Note books, Recycled note books
- **Sutra**- Paper bags (Brown and Textured Paper), Wrapping papers, Textured Handmade papers, Cards, Envelopes, Note books, Recycled note books
- **FAIR, UK**- Hand Block Printed Gift Wraps on fine handmade paper
- **Rohan Arora, Designer** – In process



# What our Partners say.....

"The beautiful block print paper from Anjali is always popular with our customers. We love the way it looks but more importantly, love the contribution sales make to this wonderful project which works on reforms needed to improve the treatment of people with mental illness in the Indian health system, and assists marginalized individuals in living a dignified life. This work is truly important and should be fully supported."

**Siobhan Wilson FAIR**, A Fair Trade Shop in Brighton, UK

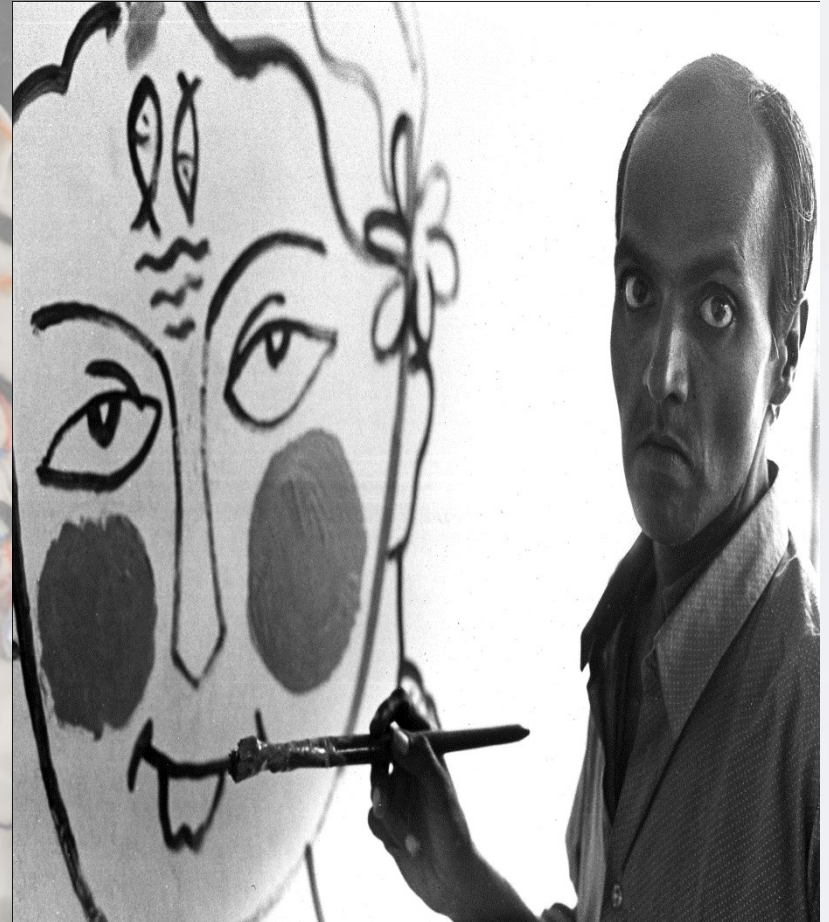
"Sasha's partnership with Anjali for past 4 years has fostered growth and learning for both the organizations. Anjali's beautiful products have impressed some of Sasha's clients across the borders. Sasha would like to support Anjali for the cause it works for."

**Chitra Sarkar Sasha**, A Fair Trade Organization working with artisans community all over India

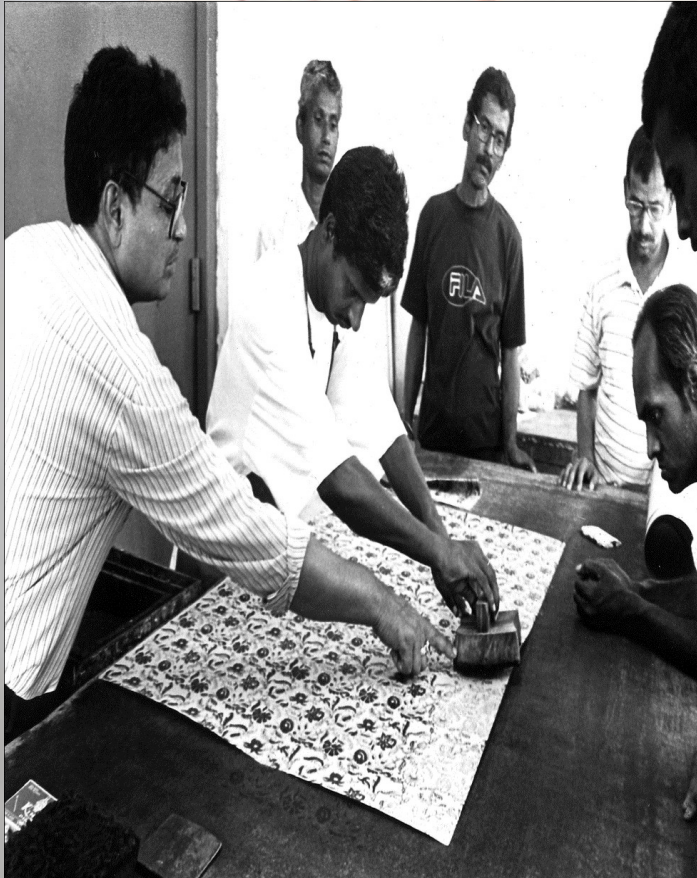


# Anjali's Values of "Work"

- Work represents a most important value in society;
- Work represents for a person a privileged way to exercise a role in society;
- Persons with serious mental health problems have the right to exercise the same social roles as other citizens;
- Work is a right for these persons to the extent that they desire to exercise this right;
- Services must be developed to answer the work needs of these persons.
- Last 5 Years (Kolkata Data):
  - Female participants: 43% reintegrated attached in domestic work, 43% earns money, 14% non-working,
  - Male participants : 71% earning, 16% domestic worker, 12% non-working.



# The Way Ahead



- Looking to apply a similar model in other places engaged with mental health and work
- Looking at an expansion of the enterprise model by targeting state-wide and/or nation-wide retail partners
- Envisaging a governmental aided pool of workers with a history of mental health problems; private-public partnership guaranteeing jobs
- Inclusion in the MHA
- Improvisation and application; no fixed solutions

# 5 Reasons to buy an Anjali Product

- Because it is a great buy!
- Every product has a story to tell!
- Because buying it enhances the self-worth of persons with psycho-social disability stepping out to earn independently for the first time
- Because you become part of an initiative
- Because, if all these reasons work for you, then you have helped us demonstrate the benefit of linking it to equal opportunity and justice for persons with psycho-social disability!

**Thank You !**

